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Serial No.: 10/603,587  
Filed: June 25, 2003  
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Amendments to the Specification:

On page 1, after the title, please amend the first paragraph as follows:

This patent application is a continuation of ~~co-pending~~ U.S. Patent Application No. 10/021,626, filed December 12, 2001, now U.S. Patent No. 6,605,034 B2, issued August 12, 2003, allowed, which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/522,516, filed March 10, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,350,232 B1, issued February 26, 2002, which claims the benefit of French Patent Application No. 99 03293, filed March 17, 1999, the contents of all of which are incorporated herein by reference in their entireties.